THE AGE Of MAN:

OR,

Mans Beginning and Last End Described, in a Legible Character of

Life and *Death*.

Setting forth the uncertainty and brevity of mans life, published on purpose to Alarum secure Sinners in this corrupt age, to amend their lives by a timely and true Repentance.

Also many serious and awakening Considerations to careless souls to prepare for our last but dreadful enemy Death.

Gen. 44. 9. *Few and evil have the days of my life been.*

Luke 12. 20. *Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee.*

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THE *Age of Man*:

OR,

Mans beginning and last end is but of few days, quickly expired: briefly handled from two several Scriptures.

Genesis the 47. Chap. 9. Verse.

Few and Evil have the Days of my Life been.

GOd the chief Lord of the world, grants the Lease of Mans Life, and this Lease is for no long time, not for years, months, nor weeks, but days, and the number of these days but few, the nature of them evil, few and Evil have the days of my life been.

The Observation from the words shall be this: the serious consideration of the brevity of our life, should provoke us to live holy in this present evil world.

Mans life according to nature is but like a rose in its full growth, cold nips it, the wind takes it, heat withers it; even such is man, though never so beautiful and lively, immediately we wither and dye, and the Curtain of the grave quickly darkens all, from our birth to our death is but a moment, a shew, and no

sooner are we seen, but in a moment hid and gone, and yet to our shame. Oh, how dormice like do we slumber away our time, we go from our Grave, the bed, to the Bed, our Grave. Our Worldly Pleasures are but waking Dreams, at last Death rouses up our souls, that have long slept in Sin, we lift up our heads and see all is going, that which we have so eagerly pursued is not, but another step, and we Launce into an eternity of joy or sorrow, rest or rigour, happiness or torment.

1. Observe hence, Mans Life but a Lease, oh then how stupidly blind are those who cannot see Lifes frailty: this thread of life is but sooner or later, some have a strong twist, others a slender; some live till near rotten, others die when scarce born, such is the emblem of our life & yet dare we trust to them? Awake souls, bethink you of mortality, oh miserable men! what be your thoughts, nothing but of goods & barns and many years? why man, thy Life is but a wind, that's soon stopped, it's but a breath, that is soon gone, our Life is but a shrub, a Leaf, a reed, a rush, grass, smoak, a cloud, Water, a bubble, a vapour, a shaddow, nothing, as Scripture asserts. To all these things is the Life of man compared to in Scripture, Job the 8 chapter and the 11 verse. Can a Rush grow without mire, &c. Isaiah 40. 7. All Flesh

is

grass; and the grace thereof is as the flower of the field, the Grass withereth, the flower fadeth, surely the people is grass, *Chron.* 29. 19. Our Days are as a shaddow upon the earth, and there is no abiding, *Psal.* 39. 5. Behold thou hast made my days as a hands breadth, and my age is nothing in respect of thee, surely every man living is altogether vanity. What mean we then to make such a do about nothing, wherefore is all this sweating; Toyling, carping, caring, and running up and down, and all but to maintain that life, which when we have our desire, and while we speak the word, perhaps we dye. But oh! how miserable for all this do some men live? Come, say they, let us enjoy pleasures that are present, let us cheatfully use the Creatures in our youth, let us fill our selves with Wine and Oyntments, and let not the flower of Life pass by us: well suppose man thy life a continual course of pleasures, hadst thou Dives fair, Solomons Robes, Davids Throne, Crœsus wealth, yet at last comes Death and takes away the wretched undone soul in the midst of her pleasures; then alas what is al thy glory but a snuff that goes out in a stench, and the pain in the end grievous, because thou livest here without pain, joys more afflict thee, then if they had never been, & thou art forst to cry out at last: Oh deceitful world, that begin-

neſt with Delight, but endeſt in grief; to whom thou haſt been beſt thou art moſt unhappy: but well fares that Soul whoſe Life is hid with Chriſts in God. This is life Eternal for to believe in God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent. O happy life, who have got Chriſt for their life; ſo when he appear then ſhall they alſo appear with him in glory: Thus have I briefly ſhown you the Leaſe of mans life what it is.

Now ſecondly, how long is this Leaſe?

1. Days.
2. Few.
3. Evil.

Anſw. Were it a year, it would quickly be expired.

In the year there are four Quarters, Viz. 1. Spring. 2. Summer. 3. Autumn. 4. Winter. To each of thoſe Seaſons may Mans Life be fitly compared.

The Spring of our Life is full of Sin and miſery: the infant no ſooner breaths, but he ſucks the Poyſon of his Parents: the child in the Cradle ſleeps not ſo ſecure, but now he wakes, then he weeps, ſickneſs gripes, cold ſtarves, hunger pinches him, and ſores Trouble him: And yet Oh meer madneſs of Men, that came ſo poor, ſo naked, ſo beggerly into the world, yet can almoſt perſwade our ſelves we were born to be proud.

After

After Spring comes Summer, then if this Birth and Melody would never have end, it would be a happy Life: but read the Words of the Preacher, Eccles. 11. 9. Rejoyce, Oh Young-man in thy Youth, and let thy heart chear thee in the days of thy Youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thy eyes, but remember for all these things God will bring thee to Judgement: Oh this Judgement is the damp that puts out all the light of comfort: Oh what a curb is this, this Word, Remember, it maketh the heart to ake, the joynts to tremble, the knees to knock against each other. this changes the Birth into Mourning, Then he saies of Laughter, thou art Mad, and of joy, what dost thou?

After Summer comes Autumn, and what may this be but an hour of Joy, to a World of Sorrow, then he sees no pleasure permanent, then he finds the sweet hath it's soure, The Crown hath it's cares, the World hath it's wants, now he sees his Life is deformed with sin, and defiled with Lust, and he transformed into the ugly shape of the devil.

Then follows the Winter of his age, the Sun grows low, and Poor Man begins to Dye by degrees, Pleasures cannot delay it, riches cannot ransome it, strength dares not defie it, the Poor Soul may not lodge there

one night longer, it dyes and departs in unremedied pangs. Consider this ye that forget God, what every season of your life tells you, (You must dye) Mirth and Musick is but a summon to Deaths knell : your chear but the shew of a Beer which must shortly carry you to your Grave, man ere he is aware has dresed his hearse. And now where is the adulterer, the murtherer, the Blasphemer are you about your sins, look on these objects, the Sun is seting, a Candle burning, an hour-glass running, flower decaying, a vapour vanishing, a sick Man groaning, a strong man dying.

Look on sinners, do you not feel something pull you up by the sleeve, and bids you beware of these sins, flye as for your life, lest you are overtaken before you are aware : remember I beseech you your life is but days, how knowest thou but this day may be thy last day?

Hence learn, Oh sinners to Number your days, that you may apply your hearts unto wisdom, think every evening there is one day of your number gone, & every morning, there is one day of misery coming on : you are not sure of long days, or many years : oh miserable men! Why stand ye here all the Day idle? there are but few hours or days that ye have to Live : at last comes the night of death that will shut up your eyes in sleep, till the Day of Doom.

2. Days

2, Days are but few.

The Phenix, the Elephant, and the Lyon, fulfil their hundreds, but behold man dyeth as soon as he begins to live, before his eye is satisfied with seeing, or the ear with hearing, or the heart with lusting, death knocks at the door, and will hear none of his excuses, before he comes to judgement: would you know your task? it's work; would you know your time, it's this day: This is the day of Salvation: Think of this all you that travel towards heaven, had we not need make haste, that must go so long a journey in so short a time? every day runs away with your life. Listen to the clock, count the hour, not a minute passes but time wasteth; Oh therefore let this be your day of salvation, for thou knowest not what the next day may bring forth, *Prov.* 27. 1.

Use. Learn, all unregenerate careless Sinners to defer your repentance no longer; it is said of the devil, he is busie, because his time is short, Rev. 12. 12. and are you not worse then Devils, is not your time shorter? dare you give way to that old Serpent? he delays no time to bring you to hell, and will you neglect all times to bring you to Heaven; your life is but like Jonas Gourd, that suddenly sprung up, then withered again. How then are you provided for this Hour? How fares

fares it with thy soul man? Canst thou say to Death, welcome my friend: canst thou say: Why are the Charet wheels so long a coming? I long, I breath, I wait, I pant, to drink of the Everlasting Rivers of pleasures: (Oh sweet Jesus,) which are at thy right hand for evermore. Oh Sinners, forget not your grave when you lye down in your beds: our days are but few, and the night will be e're long that I must dye. Indeed we peice and patch this poor Cottage as long as we can, it will at last fall into the Lords hands, and we must surrender to death, after we have lived a few days.

3. These few days of our lives are evil.

Into what a Sea of misery do we now rush our selves.

1. Here attends us the evil of sin.

2 Here follows the evil of punishment.

What is our will, but a slave to sin; what is our reason, but without reason? our best duties are filthy raggs, our worst are beyond all our expressions, the whole head is sick, the heart deceitful, the tongue unruly, the teeth as swords, the jaws as knives, the hands full of violence, the feet swift to shed blood.

Blessed God! what a world of evils are within us, we have sinned above the number of the sands of the Sea, our transgressions are multiplyed over our heads, though our days

are

re but few, our evils are many, we may quickly reckon up a thousand, and yet not one of a thousand. Well may we cry out with the Psalmist, Lord have mercy on us poor miserable wretches, and undone sinners, that have but days at most to live, and them but few, and also very evil.

Use. To apply this, well sinners. I believe the more you look the worse you will like your selves. If your days be evil, let not the night slip without repentance, every night with holy David, Water your Couch with your tears, Psal. 6. 6. Go to the Ballance, and try what a Mass lyes upon you, enough, and enough again to sink you down to Hell when your sins shall be called to account before the Judge of all the world, what account can you give of that which is endless? Alas, how art thou beset, where ever thou art, Death is at thy heels, go into a ship, there is but a board betwixt thee & the waters. walk on the ground, and there is but a shoe-soal 'twixt thee & the grave, art thou in the streets? Tiles may fall from houses and kill thee, beasts in the fields may devour thee, a thousand Deaths attend thee, for thy millions of sins, wheresoever we turn, all things seems to threaten us, and at last its the unchangeable Law of God, thou must dye, & whither, oh sinner will thy soul be hurried, into what dreadful & intollerable tor-

ment

ment must thy poor soul sink, the next moment after death thou shalt awake in Everlasting flames.

But sir, What would you have us do? you tell us, Our days are few and evil, how can we help it?

1. Repent that you have so long provoked so good a God, let the time past suffice to have been spent in fulfilling the Lusts of the flesh, time past cannot be recalled, improve the few days you have to come, you are now spreading as a green Bay-tree, but how soon thou mayst lye down in the dust is very uncertain, therefore repent.

2. Believe that God is able, through Christ to give repentance unto life, though thou art poor, miserable, blind and naked; yet believe he can inrich thee with the treasures of Heaven.

3. Pray that God would keep thee from the allurements of an evil world, and the temptations of a subtile adversary the Devil, and the lusts of thine own corrupt heart.

4. Persevere in new obedience, fear the Lord and keep his commandements, for this is the whole duty of man: use all thy endeavours to invert the Text, that as the Days of most are few and sinful, thine by Gods Blessing may be many and righteous.

Man's last End.

Meditations on *Luke* 12. 20.

This night shall thy soul be required of thee.

NO sooner have I shut up my Discourse of life, it's brevity and uncertainty, it is but days or a day, and those few and evil, but you behold the ghastly and grim Messenger death appears, and he comes with authority from the Lord of Heaven, as his Officer or Sergeant to arrest and seize the poor Soul, he asks no leave to enter, will admit of no excuse, but tells him in plain terms. This night shall thy soul be required of thee, it is not a fortnight or a week, but this Night, but view the man that must suffer this intollerable loss read the foregoing verses you will find he had goods, grounds, lands, houses, treasure enough for many Years, his barns were too little for his store, pull them down, i'le build bigger, little minding the Dance of Death before his eyes.

Doct. The loss of the soul is more then the World.

Yet this great Fool, for so the Scripture calls him, little minded that when he told his soul he had goods laid up for many years, God whil-

whispers in his ears, and tells him other news, an unlook'd for message, a speedy dispatch, no more delays, nor days, only this night, all is lost on a suddain, Mat. 2. 38. as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the coming of the son of man, they were eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, and knew nothing till the flood came and took them all away. He that thought to take his ease must now make his end, he who to day flourished like a green Bay-tree, his thoughts full of mirth, his soul of ease, but I passed by and loe he was gone: gone, whither? his body to the grave, his soul to hell: in the midst of his jollity God threatens destruction, the Devils Execution, and death expedition, and thus like a Swan he sings his funeral, here you might behold the Man warbling, solaceing, and singing out pleasant requiems: but, oh the misery, in the midst of this, neat, there is a suddain stop: had this man been in a safe harbour, could he have laid any claim to a bleeding Jesus, you would have heard other news of him; but his sin; oh his sin in trusting to Riches more then the Living God, makes him feel the weight and horrour of Gods wrath, and that to all eternity.

1. Would you avoid Deaths sting, then cleanse your selves from all filthiness of flesh and Spirit, and perfect holiness in his fear:

whilst

whilst you sleep in sin, death may arrest you on your beds. This is no wonder neither: have not many dyed suddenly in their beds, Repent therefore lest you all likewise perish.

Secondly, Learn to live, that you may be prepared to dye, here is both suddainnes and sadnes in death. Dare you sin all day and dye at night? why? Oh sinner, this night may thy Soul be taken from thee, and what will this night be to thee but a night of darknes and horror, and an increase of thy grief? this will not be an outward, but an utter darknes: You that sport your selves, and spoil others, that rob God and treasure up your own damnations: will not Death make sorrowful hearts, for your merry nights, and will not a Night come of the saddest sadnes, with stern and grim looks, how then can you help your selves? Awake rich Cormorant, what charms have lulled thee asleep, canst thou slumber while death breaks down this house, thy body, to rob thee of that jewel thy Soul, certainly thou art too secure. O Fool, this night thy soul is assaulted, death is approaching, Devils hovering, Gods justice threatning, and canst thou sleep, are thine eyes yet heavy: Behold the hour is at hand, and thou must breath thy last, and where wilt thou appear next.

Thirdly, Is the night of death at the Door, then

then ask thy soul what course to take I'le answer thee in a few words.

1. Embrace the inspiration of his Holy Spirit.

2. Follow his Laws and Commandments.

3. Attend his Royal will, though it be in opposition to all worldly profit, pleasures, and vanities which loose a Kingdom, and purchase Damnation.

Is it possible Men should be such cruel Caitiffs to their own souls, to spend their time in Revelling, Drinking, Swearing, and Railing, and in a night or moment go down to hell, what is silly mirth-alas! a night of sorrow will come, that must pay for all your Pleasures, (Viz, death) they vanish, your grief begins, and your numberless sins like so many envenomed stings run into your damned souls, and pierce them through with everlasting sorrow, look on this man on a death-bed, and hear his cries, he lamentably says.

What doth sin profit me? what doth riches, or worldly greatness bring me? O what will become of my soul?

Then the daughters of musick are brought low, poor Man or Woman, what wilt thou then do? the voice is hoarse, the Lips pale, the nostrils fall, the eyes sink in the head, all parts and members loose their office to assist, the poor man dyes, and dust returns to his dust,

then

then instead of a sweet smell a stench, instead of a Girdle a rent, instead of mirth amongst Relations, there is mourning and lamentation, their sadness seizes on the Soul, which incurrs his Doom, the Malefactor is immediately brought to the bar and indicted by the Name of Fool, and condemned by the Judge of Heaven, and this Night (the saddest that ever he saw) is that fearful and horrible executioner: the Soul is taken and cast down into the bottomless pit, where there is nothing but weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, and that for ever and for ever.

1. Use. Oh poor sinners, is Death at the door, is thy soul required of thee, cannot friends pleasures or riches help? therefore Live, that when you dye your Soul may receive Bliss, be not with Achan bewitched with a wedge of gold, if you mean your souls must be saved: Oh get into the Communion of Saints, that at last you may have society with Angels, and fruition with the diety, who is the depth of Eternity, which can onely feed and fill thy Soul for ever, scorn to feed on Earth; there is heavenly mettal, treasures of a higher temper, riches of a Nobler nature, that must help your Souls: view the glory that is to come, it will make you dispise the glory of this world.

Consider soul the reward the righteous expect and wait for, it is no less then the fruits of the precious blood of a bleeding Saviour, this should encourage them to fight the good fight of Faith, that they may be able to lay hold on eternal life.

Second Use of Lamentation.

Suffer me a while to Lament over careless sinners; Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes a Fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for poor unbelieving, impenitent, yet dying souls.

Why cloath ye the body in silk, which must rot in the grave, and adorn not the soul with faith and good works, which one day must appear before God and Angels, what will become of the darling (your soul) if you continue to fight against God: Alas poor soul, whither must it go! to God that gave it? No, there is another way for wandring sinners, Go ye cursed into Everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his Angels, Mat. 25. 41. Thither must it go with heavines of heart, into a Kingdom of darkness, a burning Lake, a Prison of confusion and terrible tortures. Oh poor soul, what a misery is this: to find such sad welcomes of thy soul to hell, what avails pompous Pride at the doleful Funerals of his

body,

body, when the news is told he is dead, friends lament him, passing-bell rings for him, the pearle-cloath covers him, dirt and stones lie over him, the Soul is hurried to Judgement without one friend to speak in his cause, and from thence sentenced to the bottomless pit, where his Companions are devils, horrour the Language, Brimstone and Fire the Torture, and eternal Death, the Souls eternal life. Oh my soul, (saith holy St. Bernard) what a Terrible Day shall this be? when thou shalt leave this mansion, and enter into an unknown Region? who can deliver thee from those ramping Lyons? who can defend thee from those hellish monsters? God is incensed, hell prepared, justice threatned, nay Mercy must prevent, or the soul is damned. Oh miserable news! the soul committed sin, sin mortgaged it to death, death now demands it, and what if he gain the whole world, he must lose his Soul. This night thy soul shall be required of thee. O wretched worldling look about thee, who is it behind thee? Him we call Gods Servant (Death:) what grim, ugly, monstrous Visage is that you see? what hollow eyes, open skull, grinning teeth, and naked ribs, only a few bones knit together: what is in his hand, an hour-glass, and a Dart, the one shewing the Decease of life, the other Deaths stroak: wert thou

exalted as the Eagle, or thy Nest set among the Stars, all this will not be worth a Button, for death is impartial, it serves all alike.

Use 3. A word of comfort to the Righteous, rejoyce ye righteous, though you suffer a little while, death is a Goal-delivery to your souls, it frees you from thraldome, here the good man in this life finds sharpest misery, the evil man sweetest felicity, but at Death there is a charging turns. The rich mans table stood full of delicates, poor Lazarus wanteth crumbs, but now he is comforted, & thou art tormented, Luke. 16. 25. Blessed are you that mourn, for you shall rejoyce, Mat. 5. 4. Happy Lazarus, who from thy beggery and loathsome sores, art carried by Angels into Abrahams bosome. Happy Thief! who upon thy true repentance, & unfeigned prayer wert received from the Cross to the paradise of thy Saviour, death doth but loose the souls of the Righteous from bonds and fetters, and instead of a Baylift to arrest, there shall be a Porter to guide them to the Gates of Heaven, there thy Conquest shall be Crowned by the hands of the most glorious Seraphims and confirmed by the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, O happy Soul, that art not required by devils, but received by Angels. Oh blessed are the dead that dye in the Lord,

for

for they rest from their labours, and their works follow them.

4. Use of terrour to incorrigible sinners.

Oh sin, the hour is coming; the dawning of that dreadful day is appearing, now for some piece of time to repent, thou couldst tell us of pulling down Barns, and building bigger: but now suppose all the world thy Gain, all these cannot buy a moment of time, the messenger is at the door, he tells thee thy time is appointed, and thy months are determined; thy days are numbred: yea, thy very last hour is limited; thy body is dying, thy Grave preparing, those ruddy lips are growing pale, thy sparkling eyes are turned dim, there is a suddain and total change, all is gone as in a dream, your children are crying, your Wife lamenting, friends sighing, and the poor sinner lying struggling, & stretching against the grand Conquerour Death, when once his pangs cease, he lies mute, and dumb, and dies.

Now have I finished my Description of Death, and I beseech you in the Name of the living God, to be frequent in practising these Meditations. It's only my design to alarum poor secure sinners to rouse them to a serious consideration of their mortality,

and

and an early preparation for eternity, that whoever hears or reads this little Book, may look on it as a warning from Heaven, or a watch-word for his soul; do not sleep as do others, but watch and be sober, before death require thy soul of thee, offer it to God with a chearful devotion, correct all thy evil courses, amend thy ways, and the blessing of God the Father, Son, and holy Spirit, be with thee all thy life, and the conduct of holy Angels attend thee at Death, to transport thy Soul into endless glory: Amen.

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